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 FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8216
 RUEHMG/AMEMBASSY MOGADISHU NIACT IMMEDIATE 8122
 INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 2387
 RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE 3177
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 S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 5664

EO 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PTER, PREL, ET, SO
 SUBJECT: HIJACKED SOMALI AIRLINER

1. (S) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM AIRPORT VIA BRIEF STOP AT EGYPTIAN EMBASSY. IT APPEARS INTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY BETWEEN SENIOR PMGSE OFFICIALS AND THE HIJACKERS. FOREIGN MINISTER AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, AND PERHAPS OTHERS, WERE CLOSETED IN SPECIAL VIP ROOM; I ASKED TO SEE ONE OR THE OTHER BUT WAS TOLD THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE. RUMOR CIRCULATING IN CORRIDOR IS THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE MADE "IN TWENTY MINUTES." THE HIJACKED AIRCRAFT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MOVED FURTHER BACK ON THE TARMAC; IT IS DEFINITELY NO LONGER NEAR THE LIGHT AIRCRAFT BELONGING TO THE AIR CHARTER SERVICE, AND IT APPEARS TO BE THE HIJACKED AIRLINER RATHER THAN THE LIGHT AIRCRAFT THAT HAVE BEEN MOVED. WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW RECENTLY THIS MOVEMENT TOOK PLACE.

3. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR WHO I FOUND AT AIRPORT SAID HE WAS ABLE TO HAVE A BRIEF EXCHANGE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GOSHU ABOUT AN HOUR BACK AS GOSHU WAS GOING INTO THE VIP ROOM. GOSHU SAID NEGOTIATIONS ARE AT A CRITICAL STAGE. HE ASKED ITALIAN AMBASSADOR IF ITALY COULD GIVE ASSURANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA WILL NOT EXECUTE THE SEVEN IN HARGEISA. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SAID ONLY WORD HE HAD FROM THE GOS IS THAT IT DENIES INTENTION TO EXECUTE THEM, BUT ITALY COULD NOT GIVE THE REQUESTED ASSURANCE. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SAYS HE HAS BEEN MAKING POINT TO THE ETHIOPIANS THAT NO RPT NO CONCESSION CAN BE EXPECTED FROM THE GOS. WE AGREED THAT WE WILL BOTH MAKE THE POINT TO ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS WE CAN AGAIN SPEAK TO THEM THAT NOT ONLY WILL GOS MAKE NO CONCESSION BUT THAT CONTINUED HOLDING OF AIRCRAFT AND PASSENGERS IS BOUND ONLY TO STIFFEN THE SOMALI POSITION.

4. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SAID HE ASKED GOSHU WHERE ARE THE SOMALIS WHO WERE RELEASED FROM THE AIRCRAFT SATURDAY EVENING AND WHY HAVE THEY NOT BEEN SEEN OR ALLOWED TO RETURN TO SOMALIA. GOSHU REPLIED THAT EGYPTIAN EMBASSY HAD NOT ASKED TO SEE THEM.

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THEY ARE IN "HOTELS" IN ADDIS ABABA AND HAVE BEEN TAKEN ON A TOUR OF THE CITY. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR SAID GOSHU COMPLAINED OF GOS' HAVING BEEN UNCOOPERATIVE IN RETURNING ETHIOPIAN CITIZENS AFTER SOME HIJACKING OR HOSTAGE TAKING EVEN IN THE PAST. IT WAS UNCLEAR WHAT THIS WAS, BUT CLEAR THAT GOSHU WAS SAYING PMGSE CONSIDERS IT IS NOW EXACTING RETRIBUTION.

5. ON WAY BACK FROM AIRPORT TO EMBASSY I STOPPED AT EGYPTIAN EMBASSY AND WAS TOLD THAT EGYPTIAN DCM HAS THIS MORNING (NOV 27) INSTRUCTED HIS CONSUL TO ASK TO SEE THE RELEASED SOMALI NATIONALS. I URGED EGYPTIANS TO TAKE THIS UP AT AMBASSADOR AND DCM LEVEL AS WELL.

6. ~~LELAND~~ ~~WILL BE~~ ~~FOR A MEETING~~ ~~WITH~~ ~~CONGRESSMAN~~ ~~LELAND~~ WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO DISCUSS HIJACKING AND AMCIT ABOARD THE PLANE. CONGRESSMAN LELAND WILL BE SEEING CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER BERHANU BAYIH AT 1400 HOURS LOCAL AND A MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN MENGISTU IS EXPECTED AT ABOUT 1600 LOCAL. HE WILL RAISE THIS SUBJECT IN BOTH MEETINGS. FOREIGN MINISTER IS HOSTING A DINNER FOR CODEL LELAND THIS EVENING.

KORN

END OF MESSAGE

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